

Ephesians 4:25-5:10 FEFC

READ THE TEXT:

Ephesians

4:25-5:10

New International Version (NIV)

25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 26 “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold. 28 Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 5

1 Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved

us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. 3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. 5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. 7 Therefore do not be partners with them. 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord.

PREACHING THE TEXT:

New International Version (NIV)

25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

This section begins with the word "therefore." So this passage continues something that was written in the previous verse. Last week we ended in verse 24 which stated that we should "put on the new self that is created to be like God in true holiness."

And we covered Paul's words that told us to put off the old self that is being corrupted. So putting off the old life and putting

on the new life in Christ are the thoughts that carry into this week's text.

Today we will see specific examples of what it looks like practically speaking to put off the old self and put on the new self. Putting off falsehood is the first example Paul gives us related to putting off the old life.

PUTTING OFF FALSEHOOD

Putting off falsehood means that we become people of truth in both the way we speak to others and the way we conduct our lives.

What comes out of our mouth is often a very good measure of what is in our heart and whether we are walking in the old self or the new. And our actions are the most telling signal of whether we are actually walking by the Spirit. Nothing hurts our witness more than unconfessed hypocrisy.

PUTTING ON TRUTH

When we put on the Holy Spirit we put on truth. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of truth. He will give us the courage to speak the truth and the power to live out the truth according to our convictions. If you are filled with the Spirit you are filled with truth and you can speak and live out the truth.

26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold.

This is a quote from Psalm 4:4. The Septuagint or really old

Greek Old Testament says:

***Psalm 4:4
(Septuagint)***

4In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.

The old self gets our shame hooked and we explode quickly to anger. We hold grudges and in the back of our minds wait for the opportunity to even the score.

This bitterness is part of the old way of life. And if we walk in the old way with bitterness then Satan will get some leverage and turn the subject onto the faults of one another as we seek revenge.

GIVING THE DEVIL A FOOTHOLD

I believe the Net Bible translated the text properly. The Net Bible says; ***Do not give the devil an opportunity.*** Many translations use the term “foothold” and then people make all kinds of military and hand to hand combat illustrations. But the meaning of the text according to Paul’s words is simply this; we should not give the devil an opportunity or a chance to do anything in our lives.

This text specifically mentions that we should not give the devil any opportunity to get into our lives through our anger. If we allow our anger to continue to boil we will give the devil a change or an opportunity to influence our relationships and take

us off course.

IS IT A SIN TO BE ANGRY?

I have heard many people misquote this passage suggesting that it is a sin to be angry. If that were the case Jesus would have sinned. I don't think he was laughing and dancing when he tipped the tables over in the temple or called the Pharisees and Sadducees a bunch of snakes.

I do not believe we sin when we bristle at injustice or react indignantly to child molestation. I do not believe it is a sin to be angry at the destruction that the devil brings to families and churches and whole cultures.

Not all anger is sin. But anger can lead to sin. So what does that look like to allow anger to turn into sin? Here are a few examples;

ANGER THAT LEADS TO SIN

1. You're angry and you refuse to forgive
2. You're angry and lash out at people because you get your shame hooked easily.
3. You're angry because that is how you control other people. You scare them into obedience. Without a mixture of discipline that is seasoned by grace and discernment you are just a bully.
4. You're angry and you stay that way so you can pay someone back.

5. Your jealousy toward someone else has turned into anger and hatred and then into gossip and slander.

HOW TO CONTROL YOUR ANGER

1. Get secure in Christ so your shame won't get hooked and turn into 'payback'

anger.

2. Learn how to influence others in a Godly way through your example and

instruction rather than scaring people into obedience.

3. Be filled with the Holy Spirit so you will not get angry about the wrong stuff.

4. Realize that it takes 15 to 20 minutes for guys to flush out their brain

chemistry after they pitch a fit. Sometimes taking a time-out will prevent us

from turning our anger into sin. If you take a time-out make sure you reengage

so you can bring closure to issues that are left hanging.

28 Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

Paul sets forth a contrast. Instead of stealing, work hard. And work hard for the purpose of having something that will build up other people. Generosity always brings unity.

29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Here is another contrast between actions that will come out of the old person that we were before we knew Jesus and the new person that we are when we walk according to the Spirit of God.

The old person allows unwholesome talk and the new person thinks about what words will build up others.

UNWHOLESOME TALK

Unwholesome talk is a very broad word that includes gossip, slander and swearing and any other kind of words that are harmful. People with explosive anger use curse words. And people who are manipulative or insecure gossip and slander. These unwholesome words come from the old nature and are a sure sign that we are not walking according to the Spirit of God in certain areas of our lives, or in unguarded moments.

BUILDING OTHER'S UP

Words that build others up are not words that are faked or words that butter people up. Buttering people up and using flattery is a

short cut to intimacy. Words that truly build others up come from taking the time to know others and calling out that which is good, right and special about that person.

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

GRIEVING THE SPIRIT

Grieving The Spirit is more than quenching the Spirit as we sometimes do. This is causing one who is always with you to experience the emotion of grief.

Quote - G.Campbell Morgan: *How would you like to live with someone who was everlastingly grieving your heart by his conduct?*

According to the Life Application Commentary: *Paul gives us a surprising reason for choosing the right over the wrong; so that we don't grieve the Holy Spirit - not just so that we don't hurt one another, but also so that we do not sadden the heart of God the Spirit. What a powerful incentive to do what is right and avoid what is evil! What a privilege and responsibility to know that our actions have that kind of effect on God. How do your words, thoughts, and behavior impact him?*

I wonder what it would be like if we ran all of our actions and attitudes through the grid of whether the things we do grieve

the heart of God or make Him smile?

THE SEAL

The seal of the Spirit is that we are marked by the Holy Spirit as a sign that we belong to God and will be pick up when Jesus Returns. When I went to purchase a refrigerator from Best Buy, I paid for the item. Then they put a mark on it stating that it belonged to Mike Thompson. I did not pick it up yet but it was paid for and it was mine and the proof is in the mark which is written on the box and the receipt that is also taped to the box.

The presence of the Holy Spirit that comes into us when we receive Jesus Christ and are born-again is the mark that proves we belong to God. He has not come to pick us up yet. But we are clearly marked. He will return to get us when everything is ready. We can take confidence that we are sealed with His Spirit and belong to The King Jesus.

If we are sealed by The Holy Spirit as belonging to God himself, then sinful behavior is beneath us. It is not good enough for us. We deserve better and more dignified things. We are children of the great king.

31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Here again is the contrast between walking according to the Spirit of God and walking in the old person that we were before

Christ.

Those who are putting on the new self and being filled with the Holy Spirit will be characterized by compassion and forgiveness. The Holy Spirit is making us more like Jesus and Jesus forgave us. So if we are filled with the Holy Spirit we will be all about forgiveness. Forgiveness will be what we are known for. That is what Jesus is known for and so also with us.

The reason we want to get rid of all bitterness and slander is that we do not want to walk like we are not filled with the Holy Spirit. And we want to live like Jesus and make Him smile.

Ephesians 5

1 Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

WALKING IN THE WAY OF LOVE

Talk about setting the bar high. It is one thing for Paul to tell us to follow his example. But here Paul is telling us to follow the example of Jesus Christ and walk in the way of love.

What does it mean to walk in the way of love? It means that we focus on what will cause other people to experience the love of Jesus Christ through our actions.

If someone has contact with you, what are some ways that they experience the love of Jesus Christ coming through your attitude and actions?

3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual

immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is one of the things that pour out of our hearts and mouths when we are filled with the Spirit of God. We will address this when we get to verses 19 and 20.

5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. 7 Therefore do not be partners with them.

EXTREME

MAKE-OVER; 'GOD'S EDITION'

The culture of Ephesus did not envision a holy God. Their so called gods enjoyed wild parties and crazy sexual parties of which they were supposedly participants. Those who came to Christ needed to change their view of God away from the trappings and practices related to the goddess Artemus. The goddess Artemus comes across like a cheap prostitute that could not control herself. We on the other hand belong to a God of holiness and true power who is in control of Himself and indeed the entire universe.

Those who give themselves to a wild life often excuse their

lifestyle. They do so by trying to give God an extreme make-over. They will say things like "God is a God of love who would not judge or punish anyone." Wishing God to be a certain way does not make Him that way.

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord.

FIND

OUT WHAT PLEASES THE LORD

Our goal is not to give God a make-over. The goal of any wise person would be to find out what pleases the Lord. Rather than trying to force God to be pleased with whatever we feel like doing our goal must always be to seek what pleases the Lord. In fact that should be our daily quest. When we pray we should not just make a huge list and hand it to God with our words. That is not a personal relationship with a holy God. Imagine if your children always handed you a "to-do" list when they spoke to you. That is what we do when we always ask God for things but we never ask Him what we could do to serve Him and show our love for Him. A two way relationship has both parties serving one another.

HOW TO FIND OUT WHAT PLEASES THE LORD

1. Read it in the word of God.
2. Get close to God so that your spiritual discernment grows stronger.
3. Hang around other Christians. The cell group is the perfect context for both love and accountability and truth spoken in love.

Next week we will study what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. If you know of anyone who has questions about the Holy Spirit bring them here next week. Let's take this home.

TAKING IT HOME

1. Can you think of ways that in your anger you have allowed the devil some space in your life or relationships?
2. In what ways have you made excuses for your behavior by giving God an extreme make-over?
3. How does it motivate you to think that you could either grieve the Spirit of God or make Him smile?
4. How is God drawing you to find out what pleases the Lord?